Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. I. BOSTON, MASS., SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1882. No. 22.

" For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The detestable tendency of superstition to make the observance of its ceremonies a duty paramount to that of respect for human rights and to regard its factitious "sins against God" as morally more enormous than sins against man is not unfairly illustrated, if perhaps a little exaggerated, by the story recently told in the British house of commons by Sir Wilfred Lawson of a father who said to his son: "Now, my boy, beware of the beginning of sin! Many a man has commenced with murder and ended with Sabbath-breaking."

Brennan, too, is unterrified. Released from prison, the first utterance of the brave young secretary of the Land League is, not that the land question is settled, but that much remains to be done, and that landlordism must be torn up by the roots. It is a significant fact that, of the leaders of the League, the two most pronounced "Irish World" men, Davitt and Brennan, have stood the test of persecution most unflinchingly. They were engaged in no mere political agitation; they had no selfish ends in view; but the love of justice had entered their hearts and the idea of justice their heads, and in the hour of trial these sustained them in the performance of their duty. There is nothing equal to moral principle as an inspiration to heroic conduct.

By Garibaldi's death the world loses one of its bravest, truest spirits, a man cast in Nature's most heroic mold. Decrepitude and disease combined during his latter years to disable him from active effort, but neither could dampen his ardor in the cause of justice, and he remained steadfast to the end, unspoiled by popularity, and ever ready, when occasion required, to lift his voice in behalf of the social revolution. The man will be remembered in history for his sterling character more than for any of his deeds, and the results of political and social progress will show that for which he is now most famous, the unification of Italy, as the most valueless achievement of his life. It was really a step backward and away from the federative policy that must sooner or later prevail throughout the world. But in taking it Garibaldi was actuated only by the purest motives, — not at all by a desire to strengthen the instrumentalities of tyranny. For that he hated everywhere, whether in Church or State, and as an uncompromising enemy thereof he will chiefly be remembered.

From two judgments recently passed by "The Critic," which claims to be one of the first literary journals in America and is edited by men who claim to be advanced thinkers, it may be seen how dangerous would be official literary censorship even when lodged in the hands of the wisest. The journal in question ardently admires Walt Whitman, and prints frequent contributions from his pen. In May, commenting upon Zola's "Pot-Bouille," it called Mr. Comstock's attention to that book, and asked him to suppress it. Curiously enough, almost at that very moment Mr. Comstock and his tools had just consummated the suppression of the works of "The Critic's" idol, Walt Whitman. Consequently, in its next issue, "The Critic" had to defend "Leaves of Grass" by an argument admirable enough, but which would have served equally well as an answer to its own attack on "Pot-Bouille." We see, therefore, that, had the editor of "The Critic" been secretary of the Vice Society, he would have been as unwarrantable a tyrant as Comstock himself, albeit in a different direction. It is of no use to change tyrants; the thing is to abolish tyranny. Let no one suppose that Liberty holds Whitman responsible for "The Critic's" inconsistency. He is above such weakness. Nor would we be understood as classing Whitman and Zola on the same literary level.

The hue-and-cry over the "nastiness" of Zola's latest novel, "Pot-Bouille," foolish and futile as it is, nevertheless has one interesting aspect, which a search for the explanation thereof reveals. Zola, in a series of powerful works of fiction, has been picturing systematically, in his realistic fashion, the morals of modern society. So long as he confined himself to certain phases of it, little or no exception was taken to his work. In "L'Assommoir" he painted in all their horrors the evils of drunkenness as it exists among the working classes, and, though the critics discussed more or less warmly the literary value of the realistic school, no serious protest was heard. In "Nana" the bold writer went a little farther, and depicted the "social evil" in its effects upon the life of a member of the Parisian *demi-monde*. This effort was welcomed with not quite the same unruffled placidity that greeted "L'Assommoir." The shrewder portion of the "truly good," cognizant of the back-door communication between their sphere of life and Nana's, and seeing themselves in the shadowy background of the new picture, began to divine the drift of Zola's purpose, and some of them attempted to parry a blow which they felt to be partially, though indirectly, aimed at themselves by branding him as an unclean writer. Still, the protest was comparatively mild. But in his latest work, true to his design, the author walks straight into the homes of the upper classes, and ruthlessly tears away the veil from before the secret sexual promiscuity with which they have so long been honeycombed. And, naturally enough, the realistic writer, adhering to the method in which he believes, uses grosser language than before in describing this grossest of moral iniquities. But clearly he has exceeded the limit. The feeble objections to "L'Assommoir" and the moderate protests against "Nana" immediately swell into a howl of hypocritical wrath from the this time rich and powerful victims of the audacious author's pen. The literary hacks whom they hire to voice their anger unite in condemning in the strongest language at their command the "obscenity" of "Pot-Bouille," and some of them go so far as to demand its suppression by law. What is the moral of it all? Plainly, this: that literature and art may paint as blackly as they will the industrial slaves upon whose toil the upper classes live; they may even reveal to some extent the revolting aspects of the inner lives of the poor creatures in whose ruin modern aristocracy takes pride and pleasure; but hands off the *bourgeoisie!* The morals of the upper classes are their own; for their misdeeds they are irresponsible; for their crimes there is no law and no punishment. Such is their infamous claim. But will it prove well founded? *Let the Revolution answer!*

THE NEW-BORN SOUL.

[New York Sun.]

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.—John iii., 7.
Those who can read the signs of the times read in them that the Kingdom of Man is at hand.—W. Kingdon Clifford.

Of yore as realities
Spirits, 'twas sung, over slumber-land stole:
Like dreams' idealities,
Deemed personalities,
Fancy has fondly created the soul:

Yea, as an entity
Graspless and ghostly, a sublimate man,
A bodied nonentity,
Phantom identity,
Heavenward wafted when ended life's span.

But, lost as locality,
Heaven its bounds to the boundless dilates;
So, thought's totality
Universality
Sneds in the soul, and the soul re-creates.

To it, in humility,
Awed by the infinite, feeling is all;
It sees the sterility,
Finds the futility,
God in the limits of thought to enthrall.

Back from past wandering,
Homeward the soul to man's breast has returned
Freed from vain pondering,
Zeal no more squandering,
Strong in the strength for which long it has yearned.

So now the rôle of man
In his own manhood on earth shall be played;
So now the soul of man
Finds the true goal of man,
Heavenly realms by this world overweighed.

The soul is a trinity,
Intellect, will, and emotion in one;
This man's affinity
Is to divinity;
This is the sainthood by manhood outdone.

The soul a reflector is,
Casting the image of heaven and earth;
No more a spectre is,
But the perfecter is,
Pointing the path unto worthiest worth.

By art beatified,
Roused by the good and redeemed by the true,
Life by love ratified,
Through duty gratified,
Such is the soul sweetest service to strew.

The soul of Humanity
Is the good gained, the bad quelled, through all time:
From dead Christianity
New-risen sanity
Saves us baptized in this race-soul sublime.

Thus as a unity
'Midst nature's processes man will be found;
From such community
Fresh opportunity
Flows for the race in one brotherhood bound.

Taken this attitude,
Souls so attempered attain the ideal;
Widened faith's platitude
By reason's latitude,
Things of the spirit arise the things real.

Oh, the nobility
Ever with heroes and martyrs to stand!
Strong the stability,
Sweet the tranquillity,
Ransomed by hope in earth's Eden-made land.

So, when the birth of us
Shall to the death of our bodies give place,
Then all the worth of us,
Freed from the dearth of us,
Deathless shall live in the life of the race.

COURTLANDT PALMER.

Liberty.

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"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions." — PROUDHON.

The Red Cross Fund.

RECEIPTS TO JUNE 6, 1882.

Previously acknowledged,	$197.55
E. C. Walker, Norway, Iowa,	1.00
Sales of "English Tyranny and Irish Suffering,"	1.10
P. A. De La Nux, Los Angeles, California,	.50
Julia H. Barnett, New York,	1.00
Charles Lundgren, Jersey City, N. J.,	.25
George Gundling, Jersey City, N. J.,	1.00
F. Schwind, Jersey City, N. J.,	.25
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Jersey City Heights Group of the International Working-People's Association, per A. Herben, treasurer,	5.00
"Basis," Boston,	2.00
Total,	$211.15

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Lorena Koloseus,	2.00
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Boston's Mental Torpor.

Anniversary week in Boston has lost nearly all of its old-time interest. No very living issues are championed to-day by the different organizations which occupy the week with their "annual reports," their balloting for president and secretary, their grim or funny little speeches, and their stomach-loading collations. Go the rounds, and one wearisome monotony prevails. Trinitarian, Unitarian, Orthodox, Heterodox, Moral Aid, Heredity, Prisoner's Friend, Eight Hours, or Peace,—everywhere there is an ebb of life. Deadness is celebrated, and it is deadness that celebrates. No wonder the West is laughing in its sleeve. Boston needs an earthquake. If there were any god minding human affairs, and responsible, as a god would be, for the sort of creatures his wit had created, he would surely exercise the authority vested by himself in himself to give this comparatively ancient Hub a right smart shaking up. But perhaps it is just as well that things should take their natural course, and work their own salvation out freely from their own innermost. The responsibility in this latter case rests, so far as there is any, on human nature. It is the inevitable play of human forces that rebuilds and revivifies the earth. And here in old Boston, as things drift to their worst, life-saving energies will be liberated in ways and by means least suspected. Such is our faith. So, when we speak of any deplorable state of affairs at home or abroad, it is simply a noting of the fact, and not a sign of unassuageable grief or despondency. We feel none; therefore, we have none to exhibit. We know full well that human nature is equal to itself, and can and will stand in the gap against whatever impending calamity. The *deadness* of which we spoke is no bad omen, considered scientifically. Was it Paul, the Apostle, who had so much to say of the falling grains of wheat which must die to live? This is undoubtedly the true explanation of the nigh all-prevailing Bostonian deadrot so manifest in these latter times at the yearly meetings.

We are glad that our philosophy leads us into this path of reconciliation with the otherwise most discouraging outlook. When deadness abounds, we know that life much more abounds, to be manifest in the good time—possibly not far distant, either—to come. People mean well. You feel that. But they are,—plainness of speech is here a virtue,—they *are* stupid; gone into their own deadness to bring forth, let us trust, in the fullness of time, life abundantly. So we say to our Western friends,—who are not themselves as much alive as they might be (rushing, jumping activity is no infallible sign of life),—old Boston is only buried in her own benumbed, platitudinizing self *for a season*. She shall rise again, clad in robes of light which you will be well pleased to honor. She has "fallen into gloom" and is afraid of Whitman,—so moral (?) is her official deadness,—but, after that conjunction, there is much good to come, be assured! a revived, happy, aggressive, creative day, to her own and the world's best good, when she shall stand once more erect here by the sea, as once Emerson predicted,

With sunshine in her brain.

An invisible witness of the proceedings at the Free Religious Anniversary, Liberty reflected somewhat in this wise: "Deadness here also, and much; but what if these intelligent, good-looking men and women should burst their cerements of worldly prudence and sectarian imitation, and let the living souls within them of which they so often prate have their full, romping freedom! Would they, and all mankind else, go to rack and ruin? Not a bit of it! Instead of being 'warts and wens' of a proselyting institution, they would severally, each and all, be reinforced and invigorated by the god *in* them. Then! think of it! With no burden of membership to maintain; no dwarfing 'we' to engineer and be morally accountable for; no 'working together to a common end' which must be trumped up in the committee room, destined only to narrow the vision of all to one little focus of agreement,—think of it! Each freed from this, expanding to full circle so! Verily, as Liberty's eye ran over the assembly, it really seemed as if a mighty force was there, once liberate it in individual brains and hearts. You, Sir Frederick, member of the body Free Religious, you have a body of your own! Stick to that, and let the power it enshrines have its free course! So with you, Potter! and with you, Adler! Ah! Liberty hears now Adler's own purpose by himself being stated. He can no longer work with the Free Religious organization; he must work alone. So he goes back to New York, where he is organizing charities. May the good spirit still strive within him to show him the deadness there is in that sort of thing also! Charities suppose poverty, and poverty comes of what? Leave your charities, ex-Free Religious president, and seek the *source* of the evil you and your band of workers are so zealous to alleviate!"

Much else did Liberty ponder, but space now forbids report.

Cut-Downs and Cut-Ups.

One of the plainest deductions of common sense that a workingman on a strike should fling into the teeth of his employer is this,—namely, *that the latter is just as much a striker as is the former.*

Here is a corporation declaring forty per cent. dividends. The operatives are receiving just enough out of what they produce to maintain them on the ragged edge of poverty and despair. Suddenly the corporation inflicts despotically what is called a "cut-down." The helpless operatives submit.

But at some future day the operatives gather courage enough to demand the restoration of the "cut-down." They thereby inflict upon the corporation a "cut-up." Immediately this act is heralded by the capitalistic press as a "strike," and the legislators begin to concoct some legal scheme by which to be able to indict the "cut-up-ers" as conspirators against commerce and industry, never seeming to reflect that they have simply followed the example of the "cut-down-ers."

The fact is that capital is always the ring-leader in strikes. The "cut-down-er" is just as much a striker as the "cut-up-er," and he is all the more culpable since he is the robber, the privileged party, the first invader.

In this plain view of the matter how infamous the scheme now being plotted in legislative halls to make the "cut-up-ers" criminals, so that their oppressors may rob them with impunity. But perhaps it is all for the best. It is painfully evident that these momentous issues between labor and capital will yet lead to bloodshed, unless labor learns the *modus operandi* of the destruction of its rights in time to thwart it by consolidated passive resistance. If it must be, then perhaps the sooner the better, even on peaceful and humanitarian grounds.

A Journal Rejuvenescent.

What is coming over the dream of the formerly staid, conservative, reactionary, awfully pious, morally stupid, grandmotherly old "Advertiser"? The Germans have a proverb: "When dead tree limbs bud and blossom, there must be something vigorous in the air." We have already had some astonishing words to quote from — may we say our venerable contemporary? Astonishing only, however, because they were given to the light of day by the "Advertiser's" type. We refer to its remarkable endorsement of that arch radical and reformer, Michael Davitt, made in terms which would have satisfied Liberty's own uncompromising bourgeois characters.

But now, once again, our eyes rest on stirring sentences which glow as though forged and rolled out of the heart of nature, so defiant are they of all things conventional and worldly. 'Tis not the fashion of this world which never passeth away to speak thus. It is the voice of the minority that is heard, — that minority with which "abides whatever is excellent." And so we wonder, — we wonder and rejoice; very much, we imagine, as they are said to do in heaven, over each newly reported repentant sinner whose heart is supposed to have turned Zionward. And yet we are conscious of a slight trembling, even while we proclaim our joy. These spasms of virtue may issue only from some lone editorial itinerant, whose sudden, Jonah-like departure some cloudy morning shall restore the old journalistic ship to the dead calm of other days. But Liberty *hopes* otherwise, and chants no ill omen. We *expect* that the record thus brilliantly begun will gather boldness, strength, and increasing brightness, as it shall be measured, measured, and measured by each returning sun's aspiring toward the millennial and perfect day. For who, with a reformer's heart in him, does not long for the hour when the simple justice of which the "Advertiser" now discourses may be done over all the earth, well knowing that the heavens will still not fail to keep their most ancient and sure place!

We quote:

Would the heavens fall if justice were done? It looks like as if many feared so. Day after day, year after year, one may watch measure succeed measure to be disposed of by our legislative assemblies, not by any standard, conventional or

otherwise, of what is just, fair, and honest in the sight of all men, but as someone is afraid somebody else may say, or may think, or criticise. Is nothing fixed? Is nothing settled? Is expediency the sole and sufficient test of public conduct? So it would sometimes seem. . . . . The heavens never stand straighter than when simple *justice* is done.

There! Have we overstated the case? Is there *not* hope?

Yes, indeed.

'Tis a banner on the outer walls.

And now, the burden upon our editorial neighbor, as upon ourselves, is to fight the *good* fight for Justice's far-seeing, all-succoring supremacy.

'Tis a good and peace-bringing fight, slaying none, but causing all to live.

Fresh aptness and point are given to Waldo Emerson's lines by these new suggestions of Springtide in the columns of our aforetime wintry neighbor:

Spring still makes Spring in the mind
When sixty years are told;
Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,
And we are never old.

Over the winter glaciers,
I see the summer glow,
And, through wild-piled snowdrift,
The warm rosebuds below.

Trades-Unionism.

Of late there has been a remarkable activity on the part of all classes of working men in this country in the way of combining for mutual protection and well-being. And not only has this activity been pushed among the obnoxious "foreigners," but simon-pure American mechanics have been forming trades unions in all quarters.

Liberty rejoices at the rapidly increasing numbers of American trades unions; not that the animus of a labor union is on a one whit higher plane than that of a capitalist union, but because labor combinations are a crude step in the direction of supplanting the State. The trades unions involve a movement for self-government on the part of the people, the logical outcome of which is ultimate revolt against those usurping political conspiracies which manifest themselves in courts and legislatures. Just as the Land League has become a formidable rival of the British State, so the amalgamated trades unions may yet become a power sufficiently strong to defy the legislatures and overthrow them.

The capitalists and their tools, the legislatures, already begin to scent the impending dangers of trades-union socialism, and initiatory steps are on foot in the legislatures of several states to construe labor combinations as conspiracies against commerce and industry, and suppress them by law. They have already boldly shown their hand in New York and New Jersey, and the capitalistic organs are putting out adroitly disguised feelers in order to ascertain how American sentiment would receive the introduction of Russian and Bismarckian methods into the United States.

Working people should be on the alert for the kind of legislation which is now pending in New York, whereby the police are given discretionary power to suppress labor meetings and are acquitted of homicide in case of the anticipated killing of refractory laborers who decline to be "evicted" at the butt end of a club from a hall where they have assembled for the peaceable discussion of grievances and remedies. When the enforcement of such atrocious legislation is attempted, every one of the five thousand laborers who may assemble in Cooper Union should take special precaution to have with him an escort in the form of a reliable six-shooter, and be ready to use it without stint upon such servants of the "law" as may feel too sure that they are already acquitted of homicide before they commence the deliberate assassination of outraged workingmen. Russian methods of government will justify Russian methods of resistance.

How plain it ought to be to an unprejudiced workingman that the legislature itself is the really dangerous and lawless conspiracy! It is in supplanting this political conspiracy by an intelligent and self-governing socialism that the trades unions develop their chief significance. In this view we are willing to temper somewhat, for the time, our criticism of the fact that the trades unions themselves are generally largely imbued with the element of force and authority. Perhaps they could hardly be expected to be otherwise, when we remember that the newborn labor organizations are plants growing out of the old political order. But, imperfect as they are, they are the beginnings of a revolt against the authority of the political State. They promise the coming substitution of industrial socialism for usurping legislative mobism. While we hail the growth of labor combinations as a potent sign of emancipation, we invite workingmen to study the methods of Liberty, throw overboard the State, repudiate all politicians and their services, and go straight forward about their business. One or two more lessons like the Pittsburgh riots, if administered intelligently, will begin to set the legislative mobists seriously to thinking.

Law and Authority.

[Translated from "Le Révolté."]

"When ignorance prevails in the bosom of society and disorder in the minds of the people, laws become numerous. Men expect everything from legislation, and, each new law proving a new disappointment, *they are led to look to it unceasingly for that which can come only from themselves*, from *their own* education, from *their own* moral condition." It certainly is not a revolutionist who says this; not even a reformer. It is a jurist, Dalloz, the author of a compilation of French laws, entitled "Répertoire de la Législation." And yet these lines, although written by a man who was himself a maker and an admirer of laws, perfectly picture the abnormal condition of society to-day.

In the existing States a new law is considered a remedy for all evils. Instead of changing themselves what is bad, the people begin by calling for a law to change it. Is the road between two villages impassable? The farmer says that a law of highways is necessary. Has the village constable, taking advantage of the stupidity of those who surround him with their respect, insulted some one? "A law is needed," cries the insulted party, "to establish a standard of politeness for village constables." Are commerce and agriculture at a standstill? "We must have a protective law," argue the husbandman, the cattle-raiser, the grain speculator; down to the dealer in old rags, there is not one who does not demand a law to protect his petty traffic. Does the employer lower wages or add to the hours of labor? "There must be a law to regulate that," shout those anxious to be legislators, instead of telling the operatives that there is another and more effective method of "regulating that,"—namely, to take back from the employer that which he has stolen from generations of workers. In short, everywhere a law! A law of roads, a law of fashions, a law of mad dogs, a law of virtue, a law to oppose a barrier to all the vices, all the evils that result only from human indolence and cowardice.

We are all so perverted by an education which from infancy stifles within us the spirit of rebellion and develops that of submission to authority, we are so perverted by this existence under the ferule of the Law which regulates all things,—our birth, our education, our development, our love, our friendships,—that, if it continues, we shall lose all power of initiative, all habit of thinking for ourselves. Our society seems unable to understand that it can exist otherwise than under the control of the law, elaborated by a representative government and administered by a handful of governors; and even when it succeeds in emancipating itself from this yoke, its first care is to immediately restore it. "The year 1 of Liberty" has never lasted more than a day, for, after its proclamation, the yoke of the Law, of authority, is resumed on the very next day.

In fact, for thousands of years our governors have been repeating with various intonations: Respect for the law, obedience to authority! Father and mother bring up their children in this sentiment. The school confirms them; it proves its necessity by incalcating in children scraps of false science cunningly assorted; of obedience to the law it makes a religion; it marries the god and the law of the masters in one and the same divinity. The hero of history whom it has manufactured is he who obeys the law, who protects it against rebels.

Later, when the child enters public life, society and literature, striking each day, each moment, like the drop of water wearing away the stone, continue to inculcate the same prejudice in him. The books of history, of political science, of social economy are full to overflowing of respect for the law: even the physical sciences are brought into requisition, and, by introducing into these sciences of observation false terms borrowed from theology and absolutism, it is skilfully contrived to confuse the mind, always to maintain respect for the law. The journal does the same work; there is not a newspaper article that does not preach obedience to the law, even though on another page it daily establishes the imbecility of the law, and shows how it is dragged through mud and mire by those charged with its maintenance. Servility before the law has become a virtue, and it is doubtful if there ever was a single revolutionist who did not begin in his youth by defending the law against what are generally known as "its abuses," the inevitable consequence of the law itself.

Art chimes in with so-called science. The hero of the sculptor, painter, and musician covers the Law with his buckler, and, eyes flashing and nostrils dilating, stands ready to strike with his sword whoever shall dare to touch it. Temples are built to it and high priests appointed, whom the revolutionists themselves hesitate to touch; and, if the Revolution itself succeeds in sweeping away some old institution, it is again by a Law that it seeks to perpetuate its work.

This mass of rules of conduct, left us by slavery, servitude, feudalism, and royalty, which is called Law, has taken the place of the stone monsters before which human victims formerly were immolated and which the slave did not dare even to touch, through fear of being killed by a thunderbolt from heaven.

Especially since the advent of the *bourgeoisie*, since the great French Revolution,—has this religion succeeded in establishing itself. Under the old *régime* but little was heard of the laws, outside of the Montesquieus, Rousseaus, and Voltaires, as opposed to the royal caprice; the people were bound to obey the good pleasure of the king and his valets, or suffer the penalty of imprisonment or death. But during and since the revolution the lawyers, having attained power, have done their best to confirm this principle on which they depended to establish their reign. The *bourgeoisie* accepted it without opposition, as its anchor of safety, to stem the popular torrent. The priesthood hastened to sanctify it, to save its bark tossing in the waves of the torrent. And finally the people accepted it as a step in advance of arbitrary rule and the violence of the past.

To understand the eighteenth century one must carry himself back to it in imagination. His heart must have bled at the recital of the atrocities committed during that period by the all-powerful nobles upon the men and women of the people in order to understand what magic influence these words, "equality before the law, obedience to the law, without distinction of birth or fortune," must have exercised a century ago over the mind of the peasant. He who up to that time had been treated more cruelly than an animal, he who had never enjoyed any right at all and could never obtain justice against the noble for his most revolting acts except he took revenge by killing him and getting himself hanged,—he saw himself recognized by this maxim, at least in theory and so far as his personal rights were concerned, as the equal of his lord. Whatever the law might be, it promised to reach equally lord and peasant, and proclaimed the equality, in the eyes of the judge, of the poor and the rich. This promise was a falsehood, as we now know; but then it was a step forward, an homage rendered to justice in the same sense that "hypocrisy is an homage rendered to truth." That is why, when the saviours of the threatened *bourgeoisie*, the Robespierres and the Dantons, basing themselves upon the writings of the philosophers of the *bourgeoisie*, the Rousseaus and the Voltaires, proclaimed "respect for the law, equal for all," the people, whose revolutionary ardor had already cooled in the face of an enemy more and more solidly organized, accepted the compromise. They bent the neck under the yoke of the Law to save themselves from the tyranny of the lord.

Since then the *bourgeoisie* has not ceased to cultivate this maxim, which, with another principle, representative government, embodies the philosophy of the century of the *bourgeoisie*, the nineteenth century. It has preached it in the schools, it has propagated it in its writings, it has created its science and its arts with this as its objective, it has thrust it everywhere, after the manner of the English devotee who slips under your door his religious tracts. And so well has it done its work that to-day we are confronted by this abominable fact: at the very hour of the re-awakening of the spirit of discontent, the people, desiring to be free, begin by asking their masters to be so kind as to protect them by modifying the laws made by these same masters.

But nevertheless times and minds have changed during the last hundred years. Everywhere rebels are to be found who will no longer obey the law without inquiring into its origin, its utility, the source of the obligation to obey it and the respect with which it is surrounded. The approaching revolution is a "Revolution," and not a simple insurrection, for the very reason that the rebels of to-day submit to their criticism all the foundations of society hitherto venerated, and, first of all, this fetich, the Law.

They analyze its origin, and find it either in a god — a product of savage fears, as stupid, narrow, and wicked as the priests who talk of his supernatural origin — or in blood, conquest by fire and sword. They study its character, and find as its distinctive trait unchangeability in the place of the continuous development of humanity, the tendency to permanently fix that which ought to develop and be modified daily. They ask how the law is maintained, and see the atrocities of Byzantinism and the cruelties of the Inquisition; the tortures of the middle ages, living flesh cut into strips by the executioner's lash; chain, club, and axe at the service of the law; the dark vaults of prisons; sufferings, tears, and maledictions. To-day still the axe, the rope, the chassepot, the prisons; on the one hand, the brutishness of the prisoner reduced to the condition of a caged beast, the degradation of his moral nature, and, on the other hand, the judge, stripped of all the sentiments that constitute the better part of human nature, living like a visionary in a world of legal fictions, applying with passionate de-

light the guillotine, bloody or dry, the coldly wicked madman not even suspecting the abyss of degradation into which he himself has fallen, compared with those whom he condemns.

We see a race of lawmakers legislating upon matters of which they know nothing: voting to-day a law governing the sanitary condition of cities without having the slightest notion of hygiene; to-morrow regulating military armaments without even understanding a musket; making laws of instruction and education while unable to give any instruction whatever or an honest education to their children; legislating at random, but never forgetting the fine to be imposed upon the vagabond, the prison and the galleys to be inflicted upon men a thousand times less immoral than they themselves, these legislators. We see, finally, the jailer becoming more and more devoid of every human sentiment, the policeman trained to the duties of a bloodhound, the spy despising himself, the informer's occupation regarded as an honorable one, corruption erected into a system: all the vices, all the bad phases of human nature favored and cultivated for the triumph of the Law.

We see these things, and for that reason, instead of stupidly repeating the old formula, "Respect for the law," we cry: "Contempt for the law and its attributes!" For the cowardly phrase, "Obedience to the law," we substitute: "Rebellion against all laws!" Only let the misdeeds committed in the name of each law be compared with the benefits which each law has conferred, let the good and the evil be weighed, and it will be seen whether we are right.

Against Woman Suffrage.

The following article, written by Lysander Spooner, originally appeared February 24, 1877, in the now defunct "New Age," J. M. L. Babcock's journal, but cannot be revived and reprinted too often until the craze of the women to join in human oppression shall have been turned into a determination to abolish human oppression:

Women are human beings, and consequently have all the natural rights that any human beings can have. They have just as good a right to *make laws* as men have, and no better; AND THAT IS JUST NO RIGHT AT ALL. No human being, nor any number of human beings, have any right to *make laws*, and compel other human beings to obey them. To say that they have is to say that they are the masters and owners of those of whom they require such obedience.

The only law that any human being can rightfully be *compelled* to obey is simply the law of justice. And justice is not a thing that is *made*, or that can be unmade, or altered, by any human authority. It is a *natural* principle, inhering in the very nature of man and of things. It is that natural principle which determines what is mine and what is thine, what is one man's right or property and what is another man's right or property. It is, so to speak, the line that Nature has drawn between one man's rights of person and property and another man's rights of person and property.

But for this line, which Nature has drawn, separating the rights of one man from the rights of any and all other men, no human being could be said to have any rights whatever. Every human being would be at the mercy of any and all other human beings who were stronger than he.

This natural principle, which we will call justice, and which assigns to each and every human being his or her rights, and separates them from the rights of each and every other human being, is, I repeat, not a thing that man has *made*, but is a matter of science to be learned, like mathematics, or chemistry, or geology. And all the *laws*, so called, that men have ever *made*, either to create, define, or control the rights of individuals, were intrinsically just as absurd and ridiculous as would be laws to create, define, or control mathematics, or chemistry, or geology.

Substantially all the tyranny and robbery and crimes that governments have ever committed—and they have either themselves committed, or licensed others to commit, nearly all that have ever been committed in the world by anybody—have been committed by them under the pretence of *making laws*. Some man, or some body of men, have claimed the right, or usurped the power, of *making laws*, and compelling other men to obey; thus setting up their own will, and enforcing it, in place of that natural law, or natural principle, which says that no man or body of men can rightfully exercise any arbitrary power whatever over the persons or property of other men.

There are a large class of men who are so rapacious that they desire to appropriate to their own uses the persons and properties of other men. They combine for the purpose, call themselves governments, *make what they call laws*, and then employ courts, and governors, and constables, and, in the last resort, bayonets, to enforce obedience.

There is another class of men, who are devoured by ambition, by the love of power, and the love of fame.

They think it a very glorious thing to rule over men; to make laws to govern them. But as they have no power of their own to compel obedience, they unite with the rapacious class before mentioned, and become their tools. They promise to *make such laws* as the rapacious class desire, if this latter class will but authorize them to act in their name, and furnish the money and the soldiers necessary for carrying their laws, so called, into execution.

Still another class of men, with a sublime conceit of their own wisdom, or virtue, or religion, think they have a right, and a sort of divine authority, for *making laws* to govern those who, they think, are less wise, or less virtuous, or less religious than themselves. They assume to know what is best for all other men to do and not to do, to be and not to be, to have and not to have. And they conspire to *make laws to compel* all these other men to conform to their will, or, as they would say, to their superior discretion. They seem to have no perception of the truth that each and every human being has had given to him—mind and body of his own, separate and distinct from the minds and bodies of all other men; and that each man's mind and body have, by nature, rights that are utterly separate and distinct from the rights of any and all other men; that these individual rights are really the only *human* rights there are in the world; that each man's rights are simply the right to control his own soul, and body, and property, according to his own will, pleasure, and discretion, so long as he does not interfere with the equal right of any other man to the free exercise and control of his own soul, body, and property. They seem to have no conception of the truth that, so long as he lets all other men's souls, bodies, and properties alone, he is under no obligation whatever to believe in such wisdom, or virtue, or religion as they do, or as they think best for him.

This body of self-conceited, wise, virtuous, and religious people, not being sufficiently powerful of themselves to *make laws* and enforce them upon the rest of mankind, combine with the rapacious and ambitious classes before mentioned to carry out such purposes as they can all agree upon. And the farce, and jargon, and babel they all make of what they call government would be supremely ludicrous and ridiculous, if it were not the cause of nearly all the poverty, ignorance, vice, crime, and misery there are in the world.

Of this latter class—that is, the self-conceited wise, virtuous, and religious class—are those woman suffrage persons who are so anxious that woman should participate in all the falsehood, absurdity, usurpation, and crime of *making laws*, and enforcing them upon other persons. It is astonishing what an amount of wisdom, virtue, and knowledge they propose to inflict upon, or force into, the rest of mankind, if they can but be permitted to participate with the men in *making laws*. According to their own promises and predictions, there will not be a single natural human being left upon the globe, if the women can but get hold of us, and add their power to that of the men in making such laws as nobody has any right to make, and such as nobody will be under the least obligation to obey. According to their programme, we are all to be put into their legislative mill, and be run through, ground up, worked over, and made into some shape in which we shall scarcely be recognized as human beings. Assuming to be gods, they propose to make us over into their own images. But there are so many different images among them, that we can have, at most, but one feature after one model, and another after another. What the whole conglomerate human animal will be like, it is impossible to conjecture.

In all conscience, is it not better for us even to bear the nearly unbearable ills inflicted upon us by the laws already made,—at any rate is it not better for us to be (if we can but be permitted to be) such simple human beings as Nature made us,—than suffer ourselves to be made over into such grotesque and horrible shapes as a new set of lawmakers would makes us into, if we suffer them to try their powers upon us?

The excuse which the women offer for all the laws which they propose to inflict upon us is that they themselves are oppressed by the laws that now exist. Of course they are oppressed; and so are all *men*—except the oppressors themselves—oppressed by the laws that are *made*. As a general rule, oppression was the only motive for which laws were ever *made*. If men wanted justice, and only justice, no laws would ever need to be *made*; since justice itself is not a thing that can be *made*. If men or women, or men and women, want justice, and only justice, their true course is *not to make any more laws, but to abolish the laws—all the laws—that have already been made*. When they shall have abolished all the laws that have already been *made*, let them give themselves to the study and observance, and, if need be, the enforcement, of that one universal law—the law of Nature—which is "the same at Rome and Athens"—in China and in England—and which *man did not make*. Women and men alike will then have their *rights; all their rights; all the rights that Nature gave them*. But until then, neither men nor women will have anything that they can call their *rights*. They will at most have only such liberties or privileges as the laws that are *made* shall see fit to allow them.

If the women, instead of petitioning to be admitted to a participation in the power of *making more laws*, will but give notice to the present lawmakers that they (the women) are going up to the State House, and are going to throw all the existing statute books in the fire, they will do a very sensible thing,—one of the most sensible things it is in their power to do. And they will have a crowd of men—at least all the sensible and honest men in the country to go with them.

But this subject requires a treatise, and is not to be judged of by the few words here written. Nor is any special odium designed to be cast on the woman suffragists; many of whom are undoubtedly among the best and most honest of all those foolish people who believe that laws should be *made*.

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